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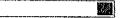
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Google Adds Mapping Technology
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By Kevin Newcomb | October 27, 2004

Google today added to its search technology holdings with the acquisition of digital mapping company Keyhole Corp, a move that has implications for its local search strategy and marks the company's expansion into subscription-based services. Financial terms were not disclosed.

"This acquisition gives Google users a powerful new search tool, enabling users to view 3D images of any place on earth as well as tap a rich database of roads, businesses and many other points of interest," said Jonathan Rosenberg, Google's VP product management, in a statement.

Keyhole's software will display an image of any address in the world, according to Google, with data drawn from a 12-terabyte database of mapping information and images collected from satellites and airplanes.

The interactive software then gives users the ability to zoom in from space-level to street-level, tilt and rotate the view or search for other information such as hotels, parks, ATMs or subways.

"With Keyhole, you can fly like a superhero from your computer at home to a street corner somewhere else in the world -- or find a local hospital, map a road trip or measure the distance between two points," Rosenberg said.

Keyhole offers consumer, professional, and enterprise versions of its software. Consumer and professional versions use Keyhole's database for mapping information. The professional version adds advanced measuring, printing and data display capabilities to the basic mapping and image manipulation features in the consumer version. The enterprise version allows users to add data, deploy the application across an enterprise, or stream a digital Earth model to multiple desktops.

Google has reduced the price of an annual subscription to the consumer version, Keyhole 2 LT, from $69.95 to $29.95. It also offers a 7-day free trial.

During its recent investor conference call, Larry Page, Google's president of products, spoke of the company's goal of indexing the word's information, and hinted that it would continue to move beyond traditional search applications, as it did with its recent expansion of Google Print, which indexes content from books, its cell phone-based SMS search, and its desktop search product.

"Our technologies will significantly expand the definition of search and the scope of our business," Page said on the call.

On that same call, Eric Schmidt, Google's CEO, put aside any speculation that the company had plans to pursue a portal strategy. "We are very much not a portal. We look at each piece of what an end user may need in this emergent online world, and we try to build the best one," Schmidt said.

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LATEST NEWS

October 27, 2004

Google buys digital mapping company

Internet search engine company Google Inc., of Mountain View, says it's bought Keyhole Corp., a Mountain View-based digital mapping company. Financial terms of the deal were not disclosed.

"This acquisition gives Google users a powerful new search tool, enabling users to view 3D images of any place on earth as well as tap a rich database of roads, businesses and many other points of interest," says Jonathan Rosenberg, vice president of product management for Google, in a written statement.

According to Google (NASDAQ: GOOG), users enter an address or other location information and Keyhole's software accesses the database and takes them to a digital image of that location on their computer screen. The interactive software then gives users options including the ability to zoom in from space-level to street-level, tilt and rotate the view or search for other information such as hotels, parks, ATMs or subways.

Unlike traditional mapping technologies, Keyhole creates a dynamic 3D interface for geographic information.